



Louisville Metro

Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission

-Annual Report: 2011-

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Sustainability and Change

The Landmarks Commission continues to promote the value of historic preservation as a viable and sustainable building practice. As noted in last year's Annual Report, investment in historic buildings continues to remain strong even in a recovering economy. It cannot be said enough that the greenest building is the one that is already built.

In 2011, the Landmarks Commission saw the rehabilitation and revitalization of numerous historic buildings in the Preservation Districts as well as Individual Local Landmarks. The renaissance of the Frankfort Avenue Victorian house which is now a part of the Comfy Cow Ice Cream shop demonstrates how historic buildings can be brought back into service while preserving historic character. Additionally, the Albert A. Stoll Firehouse on Frankfort Avenue recently was adaptively reused as a bustling new restaurant on the "Urban Bourbon Trail". This underscores how historic buildings are a vital element in heritage tourism. The Wayside Complex, in the heart of the burgeoning NuLu district in the Phoenix Hill Neighborhood, continues to progress with new restaurants, offices, and shops. The Tonini Buildings are slated to be repurposed as an affordable housing development by restoring the extant historic buildings and adding compatible new infill buildings. These are just a few examples from the more than 6500 historic buildings that are designated Landmarks that are living examples of sustainability.

Certainly one of the biggest changes for the Commission this year was the retirement of long-time staff member Debra Richards Harlan. Debra worked for the Landmarks Commission more than 26 years. Prior to joining the Commission, she worked with the Butchertown Neighborhood Association and the Old Louisville Information Center. Her energy and passion for preservation only grew stronger with her affiliation with the Landmarks Commission. She mentored numerous Landmarks staffers with her research skills, creative problem solving, and architectural history knowledge. Debra also is a trained colorist and her handiwork can be seen on countless historic and new buildings throughout Louisville. She also guided the Bardstown Road Overlay District from its infancy to its current identity as a thriving commercial corridor that maintains its historic character. Debra brought a unique combination of skills and talents to the Commission that are irreplaceable.

Metro Landmarks Commission members have invested countless hours in support of the city's historic preservation districts and individual landmark owners during this past year. We will miss the Commissioners who stepped down this past year. Carolle Jones Clay and Don Keeling contributed greatly with their expertise during their tenure with the Commission. Thank you!

We are fortunate that there are superbly qualified volunteers that have agreed to succeed them beginning with the 2012 term. The Commission welcomes Chris Hartman who is the Director of The Fairness Campaign, as well as an Old Louisville resident. Phillip Bills, AICP, joins the Landmarks Commission as the Director of Planning and Design Services. Mr. Bills previously worked with the Jefferson County Planning Department and is returning to Metro Government from the private sector. We look forward to the input and new perspectives of these two new Commissioners.

Finally, many thanks to all of the Landmarks Commissioners, Architectural Review Committee members, and neighborhood supporters whose generous gifts of time and talents continue to enrich our community!

"The Metro Council declares as a matter of public policy that the preservation, protection, perpetuation, and use of neighborhoods, areas, places, structures, and improvements having a special or distinctive character or a special historic, aesthetic, architectural, archeological, or cultural interest or value and which serve as visible reminders of the history and heritage of this Metro Government, commonwealth, or nation is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety, welfare, and economic well-being of the people."

Louisville Metro Ordinance 32.250 Excerpt—Public Purpose of the Commission

Local Designations



Farmington. This historically significant dwelling dating to 1815 was designated at the owner's request as an individual local landmark by the Commission at its August 2011 meeting. It was built for John and Lucy Fry Speed. It is a Federal style brick house of 14 rooms designed by Paul Skidmore. Skidmore's design is thought to have been largely influenced by Thomas Jefferson with the two embedded octagonal rooms in the center of the house that are similar to Jefferson's design for an unidentified residence.



Twig and Leaf. This historic restaurant located on Bardstown Road was initially reviewed by the Commission in November 2010 for designation but at the owner's request, final consideration was deferred until March 2011. The eatery was designated as an individual local landmark for its association with Googie-style architecture, a modern form inspired by California roadside architecture.



Taylor-Herr House built c 1794 the homestead and farm belonging to Col. Richard Taylor, an early settler in the area and Revolutionary War Colonel. The second portion of the house constructed in 1820 is associated with John Herr. Both periods of construction are important documents of the early settlement and development of Jefferson County. The house and property were designated at the owner's request as an individual local landmark in November 2011.

Kenwood Drive-in. The Commission considered the designation request for the 1949 Kenwood Drive-In Movie Theater at a public hearing in June 2011. Two subsequent meetings, including a second public hearing in September

2011, were convened to consider this resource as an historic cultural landscape. The Commission determined that the loss of architectural integrity was too great to designate the Kenwood Drive-In as an individual local landmark.



National Register Nominations

Conrad-Seaton House and Archaeological Site

The Landmarks Commission considered the nomination of the Conrad-Seaton House and Conrad Pottery archaeological site in April 2011. The significance of Valentine Conrad to Jeffersontown and more importantly the regional pottery industry are discussed in "The Pottery Industry of Jefferson County, Kentucky, 1803-1840s". The site gives us important information about the choices in an early developing location in Kentucky's most urbanized county and about pottery industry. Valentine Conrad arrived around 1803 and constructed housing that enabled him to live and work in what was then a frontier settlement.



Jefferson County Historic Resources Survey

Numerous early- and mid-twentieth century resources, nearly twenty-five percent of the total Jefferson County housing stock, now meet the fifty year age criterion for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listing. Post-War subdivisions are often similar in appearance and a tool for discerning their distinct identities and significance for NRHP eligibility determinations is critical.

The Louisville Metro Department of Planning and Design Services (PDS) is administering a project to develop survey techniques applicable to documenting mid-20th century historic resources and cultural landscapes and to evaluate their significance. Through consultation with Metro Historic Landmarks Commission (LC) and Kentucky Heritage Council (KHC) staff, the survey team from the Kentucky Archaeological Survey (KAS) has selected a representative sampling of post-World War II era subdivisions along Bardstown Road and Dixie Highway.



In addition to the post-World War II survey, a less extensive sampling of subdivisions from the 1900-1930 time periods will be included for context development as well as for the survey record. The survey and documentation techniques developed in this project will become critical local planning tools as well as valuable tools for evaluations of NRHP and local landmark eligibility. This project will ensure that Louisville keeps pace with the understanding of its built environment and retains its position as a preservation leader.



Landmarks staff, as a part of the KAS survey, is conducting an evaluation of twentieth century neighborhoods throughout Louisville Metro to identify eligible historic resources. Through this work, new historic contexts for twentieth-century resources can be developed to guide a preservation plan for the future of Jefferson County. A report of survey findings is expected in July 2012.

Public Outreach

The Commission engaged with the public in various ways in 2011 and continues to explore new avenues. To name a few:

- Daily interaction with the public/district residents regarding historic preservation practices, design processes, and on-site evaluations.
- Architectural Review Committees—conducted 23 case hearings plus additional ARC meetings for continued cases. The newly implemented SIRE system makes agendas, case reports, and applicant materials for committee-level projects available to the public through the Planning and Design Services website.
- Renovate Louisville—I new episode “Frank Lloyd Wright’s influences on Kentucky”, aired in 2011. Two episodes were produced and will be aired in 2012— “The Bardstown Road Baxter Avenue Overlay District Past & Present” and “Historic Home Addition in Cherokee Triangle”.
- Clifton—multiple task force meetings evaluating Landmarks—studying all aspects from staff to ARC reviews, and guidelines.
- Old Louisville—initiated further study of revisions to current Window Design Guidelines for the Old Louisville Preservation District.
- Two education sessions presented by Landmarks staff in conjunction with Preservation Louisville’s “Hands on History” series covering topics related to additions and researching historic buildings.
- Participated at Preservation Louisville’s “Preservation Fest” with an information booth and a Landmarks 101 education session.
- Landmarks staff also gave presentations to three University of Louisville graduate-level classes in History, Planning, and Law.

Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness

In 2011, applications for Certificates of Appropriateness continued to follow the pace of last year which reflects improvement in the rehabilitation construction sector. Case total was 205 (195 in 2010, 178 in 2009, 204 in 2008, and 220 in 2007). The general trend demonstrates that case load is returning to pre-Recession levels, and indicates that there is a distinct interest in preservation investment. Per district the number of applications generally held from the previous year with the exception of Old Louisville which saw an increase of 25% - primarily in house additions and new garages. A comparable number - 88% - were reviewed at staff level compared with 85% in 2010, underscoring the Commission's commitment to work with property owners in an efficient manner.

The total project value was approximately \$5.3 million* in 2011. The overall value for preservation projects was less in comparison to 2010 largely due to the absence of major redevelopment projects in the districts. The number of cases continued to increase, however, and the type of work including additions, garages, decks, windows, and roofs shows that property owners are investing in home improvement projects.

There was a lot of activity affecting Individual Landmarks, specifically with a new stair tower for City Hall and the continued redevelopment of the Wayside properties (designated in 2008) located in NuLu. Additionally, a resolution for the 100 Block of West Main buildings (designated in 2010) was reached in 2011, and the initial proposed work was reviewed by the Individual Landmarks ARC.

There were no appeals reviewed by the Landmarks Commission in 2011.

*Project value information is supplied by applicants.

DISTRICT	STAFF REVIEWS	COMMITTEE REVIEWS	TOTAL RE- VIEWS (2010)	ESTIMATED VALUE*
Butchertown	13	4	17 (13)	\$770,000
Cherokee	51	4	55 (63)	\$1,118,000
Clifton	41	5	46 (44)	\$1,566,000
Individual	3	2	5 (12)	\$770,000
Limerick	1	0	1 (3)	\$3500
Old Louisville	65	8	73 (58)	\$872,000
Parkland	0	0	0 (1)	\$0
West Main	7	0	7 (1)	\$205,000

Review of Demolition

In 2011, the Landmarks Commission reviewed properties being considered for demolition by Louisville Metro including visual and photo surveys, development of rehab estimates, and documentation. Staff reviewed these public demolitions in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and pursuant to Programmatic Agreement with the Kentucky State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). In 2011, the team reviewed 134 historic structures determining that 51 were contributing and made the following analyses and conclusions:

- 39 Structures were found to be historic structures in good candidates for rehabilitation.
- 12 Structures were found to be severely deteriorated and recommended to the SHPO for demolition. Staff provided costs estimate to rehabilitate. All of these structures to date have been approved for demolition by the SHPO. Structures approved for demolition by the SHPO were documented by staff with Kentucky Historic Resources Survey Forms prior to removal. Staff also prepared 10 survey forms for historic buildings that were declared emergency demolitions.

Staff reviewed 123 private demolition applications for historic structures to determine the necessity of 30 day public notice. As a part of the review, notifications alerting interested citizens of these private demolitions are processed by staff.

Significant Issues and Recommendations

In its efforts to achieve its Public purpose the Commission utilizes its expertise, passion, and authority to actively engage with the citizens of the community on a daily basis. Resulting from these efforts the Commission has identified several significant and ongoing issues and has developed specific recommendations and initiatives to address these issues.

1. **Public Education.** Discussions that have taken place in the public forum regarding the economic and social value of preservation and the work of the Commission show a marked lack of correct information and/or misconception. Methods should be developed to provide clear and accurate information for the Metro-wide discussion of preservation and for a greater understanding of the work of the Commission. In 2011 the Commission: attended neighborhood meetings; presented educational programs; co-produced three more episodes of Metro Television's award winning Renovate Louisville series focusing on local preservation, architecture, and construction topics. The findings and conclusions that result from the Jefferson County Historic Resources Survey Report will serve as a preservation planning tool to inform the community about newly identified historic resources.
2. **Clarification of Economic Impacts.** As an element of Public Education the economics of preservation play a particular role in the more complete understanding of preservation by property owners, developers, and Metro agencies. Specific economic data research, and conclusions should be compiled for presentation and public discussion. In 2011 the Commission: utilized Metro's information and development tracking system to quantify the economic impacts of projects in preservation districts.
3. **Clarification of Environmental Impacts.** As an element of Public Education, the significant environmental implications of preservation represent a quickly developing field of real public interest and study. Specific local and national environmental data, research, and conclusions should be compiled for presentation and public discussion. In 2011 the Commission: began re-evaluating its guidelines and policy documents to reflect the latest research and ideas in this area as well as investigating new green building materials that are compatible with historic buildings. Staff also has been researching design guidelines in other communities to study approaches of incorporating green technologies while maintaining historic fabric and character.
4. **Rehabilitation and Demolition.** Historically significant structures, neighborhoods, and other resources that are not locally designated are afforded very little protection from demolition. A comprehensive, Metro-wide demolition and rehabilitation policy should be developed to further protect and re-service these structures. In 2011 the Commission: continued extensive discussions with Codes & Regulations and Metro Housing staff regarding Louisville's rehabilitation and demolition policies; collaborated on the federally funded Neighborhood stabilization program; increased participation in the review of demolitions initiated by Louisville Metro. The recently created Vacant and Abandoned Properties Program (VAP) offers a new opportunity for staff to develop strategies to preserve distressed historic structures.
5. **Partnerships.** Growing interest in local and national designation, continually expanding efforts in public education, and increasing involvement in community planning and review in a climate of increasingly limited budgets for activities and staffing creates many challenges. The Commission should continue to foster partnerships with other historic preservation professionals and organizations to leverage available resources in addressing significant issues. In 2011 the Commission: partnered with the Preservation Louisville by participating in the "Hands on History" workshops and Preservation Fest; area historic house museums by providing technical assistance and serving on advisory committees at Locust Grove, Riverside—the Farnsley Moremen Landing, the Little Loomhouses, and Blackacre; the Louisville Historical League and Louisville & Jefferson County Environmental Trust via board membership; Metro TV to develop concepts for ongoing and future Renovate Louisville programs; the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to undertake the Metro-wide architectural and archeological survey undertaken in conjunction with the Kentucky Archeological Survey.
6. **Staffing.** During the recent years of recession, government budgets have been significantly reduced. Three Landmarks staff positions have been funded with CDBG monies from the federal government. In 2011, budget cuts at the federal level resulted in the loss of one of the two Preservation Specialist positions. To maintain good service and properly support the initiatives and programs of the Commission, adequate staffing is critical to the Landmarks Commission. Efforts should be made to ensure that all Landmarks positions are funded within the Metro budget.

**Louisville Metro
Historic Landmarks and Preservation
Districts Commission**

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**Greg Fischer,
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Louisville Metro Council

Please also visit our website!

<http://www.louisvilleky.gov/PlanningDesign/Historic+Landmarks+and+Preservation+Districts+Commission.htm>

Facts & Figures for 2011

205—Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness

88% — Applications reviewed at Staff level

6544—Approximate number of structures located within local districts and individual landmarks

3.0 % - Properties undergoing exterior change requiring review

0—Appeal of Decision to Commission

4—Designations of Individual Local Landmarks

14—Episodes of Renovate Louisville filmed in partnership with Metro TV

8268—Number of “hits” for Renovate Louisville episodes on YouTube to date since 2007

1—National Register Nomination

7—Landmarks Public Outreach Presentations

1—Landmarks Staff Retirement

